

March 2015

This edition contains a summary of activities carried out by the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and its Secretariat from January through March 2015. This edition includes information about the following:

- Fourteenth session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
- Expert Group Meeting on the theme “Dialogue on an Optional Protocol to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”
- Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Permanent Forum in the Russian Federation
- Observations by the Permanent Forum on World Bank draft safeguards on indigenous peoples
- Activities of individual members of the Permanent Forum
- The participation of Indigenous Women at the session of the Commission on the Status of Women

The Message Stick highlights the activities undertaken by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) as well as its Secretariat. It is produced by SPFII staff.

Fourteenth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

The Permanent Forum will hold its 14th session from 20 April to 1 May 2015 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. This year will focus on follow up to the recommendations of the Permanent Forum, especially in the following areas: (i) outcome of the high-level plenary meeting also known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples; (ii) post 2015 development agenda; and (iii) youth, self-harm and suicide. The session will also look at the methods of work of the Permanent Forum.

Participation

A large number of participants are expected for this session from indigenous peoples' organizations, States, the UN system and other intergovernmental organizations, NGOs and academia.

Human Rights

The discussion on human rights will focus on economic, social and cultural rights. The day devoted to the discussion on human rights is Monday, 27 April. This will include a dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous peoples, and other human rights mechanisms.

Regional Focus: the Pacific

The regional focus this year will be on the Pacific. The purpose of this discussion is for Permanent Forum members, indigenous peoples' organizations, States and UN agencies to discuss specific issues related to indigenous peoples in the Pacific region.

Other events

Numerous side events will take place throughout the session. These are organized by indigenous peoples' organizations, Member States, UN entities, other intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, and others. The schedule of side events will be made available at: www.un.org/indigenous.



A cultural event with performances by indigenous musicians, followed by a reception will take place on Tuesday, 21 April. An art exhibit on “indigenous peoples housing and sustainable settlements” will be on display throughout the session. Press conferences will also take place throughout the session.

Making statements

Indigenous peoples’ organizations, States, UN agencies, and others take the floor during the annual Forum session. The time allotments for these statements are at the discretion of the chair, but generally do not exceed five minutes. When indigenous peoples take the floor, priority is given to caucus statements and joint statements. Those wishing to speak should sign up on the speakers’ list.

For more information on participation, the programme of work and reports submitted for consideration by the Forum, please visit: <http://undesadspd.org/IndigenousPeoples/UNPFIIISessions/Fourteenth.aspx>

Permanent Forum holds inter-sessional meeting in Salekhard, Russia



At the invitation of the Government of the Russian Federation, the expert members of the Permanent Forum met from 25 to 27 February 2015 in Salekhard – the administrative center of Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug – Russia. At the meeting, the Permanent Forum discussed their methods of work.

The Permanent Forum held a meeting with the Governor of the Yamal-Nenets autonomous district, the Director of the Department of Inter-ethnic Relations of the Russian Federation

Ministry of Culture, the Chairperson of the Yamal-Nenets Legislative Assembly, the President of RAIPON and the Chair of the Permanent Forum.

The experts also met with representatives of indigenous peoples’ organizations, listening to their main concerns and issues. There were also formal dinners and cultural programmes as well as a visit to a reindeer farm to meet with the Yamal-Nenets, an indigenous group who sustain themselves through reindeer herding and fishing.

Expert Group Meeting on the theme “Dialogue on an Optional Protocol to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”

On 28 and 29 January 2015, the Expert Group Meeting on the theme “Dialogue on an Optional Protocol to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples” was organized at the UN. Experts from six socio-cultural regions made presentations during the meeting: Ms. Fleur Adcock; Mr. Mattias Ahren; Mr. James Anaya; Mr. Suhas Chakma; Mr. Elifrutaha Laltaika; and Ms. Gulia Kutsenko. Ms. Ana Manuela Ochoa, expert from Latin American and Caribbean region could not attend due weather conditions.

The Expert Group Meeting was organized around the following themes:

- Why is an optional protocol required in relation to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples?
- What are the limitations of the current international human rights law system in regard to monitoring of indigenous peoples’ rights? Does it encourage ‘rights ritualism’?
- What are some of the problems with the implementation of the UN Declaration pertaining to lands, territories and resources?
- What are the lessons that can be learned from other mechanisms?
- What would be the features of an oversight mechanism? Who would be subject to review and what would the admissibility requirements be?

- Is there an existing UN body that could be adapted to do the work of an oversight body?

The report of the meeting will enrich the discussions of the PFII 2015 session.



Observations by the Permanent Forum on World Bank draft safeguards on indigenous peoples

On Friday, 6 February, the Chair of the Permanent Forum, Dalee Sambo Dorrough, transmitted a letter to Dr. Jim Yong Kim, President of the World Bank, containing “Observations of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on the proposed World Bank Environmental and Social Policy and associated Environmental and Social Standards, especially the proposed safeguards for indigenous peoples (ESS7)”.

The Permanent Forum noted that the draft policy contains some positive elements. However, it stated that “important aspects of the Environmental and Social Policy in general and the associated Environmental and Social Standard on indigenous peoples in particular fall short of protections provided by current safeguard standards and already agreed-upon international human rights standards, including those contained in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.” The Forum detailed specific observations and highlighted areas for change. The full observations are available on the website of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

Activities of Individual Members of the Permanent Forum

Participation during March negotiations on post-2015 development agenda

From 25 to 27 March 2015, Permanent Forum member Joan Carling attended the intergovernmental negotiations on sustainable development goals and targets. She prepared a statement delivered at the interactive dialogue with Major Groups and Stakeholders, which emphasized that indigenous peoples cannot be made ‘invisible’ in the post 2015 process. Ms. Carling also held a number of bilateral meetings with States during which she highlighted the major issues for indigenous peoples in the agenda, and discussed how this can be reflected in the political declaration and the goals, targets and indicators of the post-2015 development agenda.

Participation at UNESCO panel

On 18 March 2015, Permanent Forum expert member Oliver Loode participated in a roundtable event entitled “Preservation and Promotion of Cultural and Linguistic Heritage of Sakhalin Indigenous People (the Nivkh)” at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, France. The roundtable was dedicated to the 80th jubilee of Mr. Vladimir Sangi, the preeminent Nivkh writer and a founder of the Nivkh alphabet, orthography and grammar. The event was organized by UNESCO, the Permanent Delegation of the Russian Federation to UNESCO, the Sakhalin Region of the Russian Federation and the Sakhalin Energy Investment Company. Mr. Loode noted that the issue of the protection and revitalization of indigenous peoples’ languages is a foremost priority of the agenda of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

Africa Regional Consultation of World Bank

On 3 March 2015, expert member of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Mr. Gervais Nzoa participated in a consultation organized by the World Bank in Yaounde, Cameroon. The consultation was carried out in order to gather views on the draft Environmental and Social framework, in

particular the draft safeguard on indigenous peoples (ESS7). During the consultation Mr. Nzoa provided recommendations concerning the need for platforms for exchanging information on and monitoring indigenous issues at the country, regional and international offices of the World Bank.

Latin American regional preparation of Beijing+20

From 2 to 4 March 2015, in Lima, Peru, Ms. Maria Eugenia Choque Quispe participated in a meeting of organizations of indigenous women in Latin America. The meeting discussed issues related to Beijing + 20, indigenous women in the post 2015 development agenda and indigenous women and the public policies of States. Also present at the meeting were representatives of UN programmes, funds and agencies, including UN Women, ECLAC, UNICEF, and the UN Population Fund. Ms. Choque Quispe provided comments on the recommendations of the Permanent Forum on indigenous women and the post-2015 development agenda.



Second global Indigenous Peoples Forum at IFAD

On 12 and 13 February 2015, Permanent Forum members Joan Carling and Maria Eugenia Choque Quispe participated in the second global meeting of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum at the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in Rome, Italy; the Chief of the SPFI also participated at the event. Participants at the Forum deliberated on a range of issues, with a focus

on traditional food systems and sustainable development.

Members of Permanent Forum participate in high level meeting at FAO

UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues members, Alvaro Pop, Devasish Roy and Joan Carling, together with indigenous peoples' representatives and experts from six of the seven regions identified by UNPFII, participated in a high level meeting at the Food and Agricultural Organization on 2 and 3 February 2015 in Rome, Italy. The meeting was entitled "Indigenous Food Systems, Agroecology and the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security". Participants had the opportunity to dialogue with FAO senior management and technical experts on issues related to land, natural resources, fisheries, food systems and traditional knowledge.

Statement of Chair of Permanent Forum to ECOSOC

On 28 January 2015, the Chairperson of the Permanent Forum, Dalee Sambo Dorough, presented at the annual meeting of the ECOSOC Bureau, with Chairs of the ECOSOC subsidiary bodies. In her statement, Ms. Sambo Dorough noted that "[t]he Permanent Forum looks forward to greater engagement and interaction with the Council in moving forward with our work to draw greater attention to and more importantly, concrete and effective action to promote and strengthen the status and human rights of Indigenous peoples within the UN system." The Chair provided remarks on the Millennium Development Goals and the Post 2015 development agenda; follow up to the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples; interaction with ECOSOC and other priority areas.

Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Participation of Indigenous Women at the Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

The 59th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was held from 9 to 20 March 2015 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The main focus of the session was on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, including current challenges that affect its implementation and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Commission reviewed progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 20 years after its adoption at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. The session also addressed opportunities for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda.

The Secretariat of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (SPFII), together with the International Forum on Indigenous Women (FIMI), IFAD and other partners co-organized a Panel discussion entitled "Beijing+20: The voices of Indigenous women", on Friday, 13 March 2015. Ms. Vicky Tauli Corpuz, Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples also addressed the meeting, together with the Permanent Representative of Argentina, and the Assistant Secretary General and Deputy Executive Director of UNWOMEN. In preparation for the conference, the Secretariat prepared a report compiling the submissions by member states to the CSW that are relevant to indigenous women, entitled "Twenty year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action and Beyond: a framework to advance indigenous women's issues."

On 19 March, a statement on behalf of Permanent Forum expert member Mariam Aoubacrine was delivered to the plenary session of the CSW on the experience and lessons learned of the Permanent Forum in the integration of gender perspectives in their work, challenges encountered, and opportunities for moving forward.



Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Permanent Forum was established by the UN General Assembly in 2002. It is based at UN Headquarters in New York in the Division for Social Policy and Development of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DSPD/DESA).

The Secretariat is located in the UN Secretariat Building, Room S-2954

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